
**Economic Development,
Agriculture & Trade Committee**

HB 1423

Brief Description: Controlling invasive knotweed.

Sponsors: Representatives Curtis, Linville, Clibborn and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a statewide program in the Department of Agriculture for the control or containment of invasive knotweed and appropriates \$2 million for that purpose from the State General Fund for the 2005-07 biennium.

Hearing Date: 2/18/05

Staff: Meg Van Schoorl (786-7105).

Background:

Knotweed

Knotweed is an aggressive noxious weed that in recent years has appeared in hundreds of patches in the flood zones along rivers and creeks, roadside ditches, and beaches. Knotweed forms massive root clusters up to nine feet deep, and grows in dense stands that can reach 12 feet in height. Knotweed commonly spreads when its roots and stems are moved by waterways, floods or contaminated soil. It spreads quickly along riparian corridors in a downstream direction, shades out native plants and destroys habitat. There are four interrelated species of knotweed in Washington State: Japanese, Giant, Bohemian, and Himalayan. All are listed on the Washington State Noxious Weed List as Class B, which is defined as noxious weeds that are not native to the State, that are of limited distribution or are unrecorded in a region of the State, and that pose a serious threat to that region.

Knotweed Control Program at the Department of Agriculture

The Legislature appropriated \$500,000 from the State General Fund to the Department of Agriculture (Department) in 2004 for the control of Japanese knotweed in southwest Washington. With these funds, the Department created a knotweed control program to:

- provide funding through interagency agreements and contracts for knotweed control in selected watersheds by six cooperators: the noxious weed control boards of Clark, Skamania, Pacific, and Lewis Counties; the Washington State Parks and Recreation

Commission; and the Nature Conservancy. During the 2004 control season, the cooperators surveyed over 311 river miles and treated 326 acres of infestation;

- provide cooperators with public information materials and with all of the herbicide used for control treatments; and
- contract with WSU Mount Vernon Research and Extension Unit to evaluate the different treatment strategies used by the cooperators.

For 2005, the Department plans to continue working with cooperators in southwest Washington to survey and treat watersheds. New proposals for funding for the 2005 control season will be accepted in April. The Department has requested that a proviso be added to the 2005 supplemental budget so that the program would be allowed to work outside of southwest Washington. This geographic expansion would enable the program to assist with ongoing control programs in other parts of the state and to create control programs in eastern Washington where knotweed is not well-established and can be eradicated.

Summary of Bill:

A statewide program is established within the Department for the control or containment of invasive knotweed. The program is intended to build upon the 2004 Japanese knotweed control pilot project conducted in southwest Washington. The term "invasive knotweed" is defined to include four species including Japanese knotweed, Himalayan knotweed, Giant knotweed, and Bohemian knotweed as well as hybrids and crosses of those species.

The Department is provided \$2 million annually from the State General Fund to enter into agreements with eligible entities for the purposes of this program. Eligible entities include but are not limited to: state agencies, local governments, special purpose districts, Indian tribes and nonprofit organizations. The Department may use no more than 5 percent of the funds for its own costs related to the administration of the program.

The Department must submit a report to the legislature by December 1, 2006. The report must be done within the dollars allowed for administration, and must focus on progress made and future recommendations for containing and controlling invasive knotweed under the program.

Appropriation: The sum of \$2 million GF-S for FY 2006 and \$2 million GF-S for FY 2007.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2005.